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COMICS



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BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

MAGNETO TRIUMPHANT

JIM LEE
©
WILLIAM



STAN LEE PRESENTS

FIRESTORM

By CHRIS CLAREMONT & JIM LEE

I SAY
AGAIN,
X-MEN--

--THESE
ACOLYTES
HAVE PLEDGED
THEMSELVES
TO MY SERVICE
AND MY
CAUSE.

I SHALL
NOT
ABANDON
THEM.

SCOTT WILLIAMS
INKER

JOE ROSAS
COLORIST

TOM ORZECOWSKI
LETTERER

BOB HARRAS
EDITOR

TOM DeFALCO
FIRECHIEF

HAMMER BAY, CAPITAL CITY OF THE INDIAN OCEAN NATION OF GENOSHA, AMIDST THE RUINS OF THE CENTRAL MEDICAL FACILITY...

THEY ACTED IN AN EXCESS OF ZEAL. IF SO...

...I-- AND I-- ALONE-- SHALL DETERMINE THEIR APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT.

PARDON MY ASKING, M'SIEU--

-- BUT WHO DIED AN' MADE YOU GOD?

MAGNETO-- DON'T DO THIS!

YOU'RE PLAYIN' RIGHT INTO THE HANDS OF EVERY DEMAGOGUE WHO B' LIEVES MUTANTS OUGHT'A BE WIPED OFF THE FACE O' THE EARTH!

HE DOESN'T CARE, ROGUE.

ABOUT YOUR WORDS ANY MORE THAN THE FACT HIS PEOPLE JUST LAID WASTE TO THE HEART OF A CITY-- TO A HOSPITAL NO LESS!

WHY SHOULD THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM-- SELF-APPOINTED LEADER OF MUTANTKIND-- CARE A WHIT ABOUT THE LIVES, AND DEATHS, OF ORDINARY HUMAN BEINGS?

AS ALWAYS, CYCLOPS, YOU SEE ME AS YOU WISH. AND WHO KNOWS, PERHAPS THAT IS AS I TRULY AM-- ABOUT THAT, YOU ARE QUITE CORRECT, I DO NO LONGER CARE.

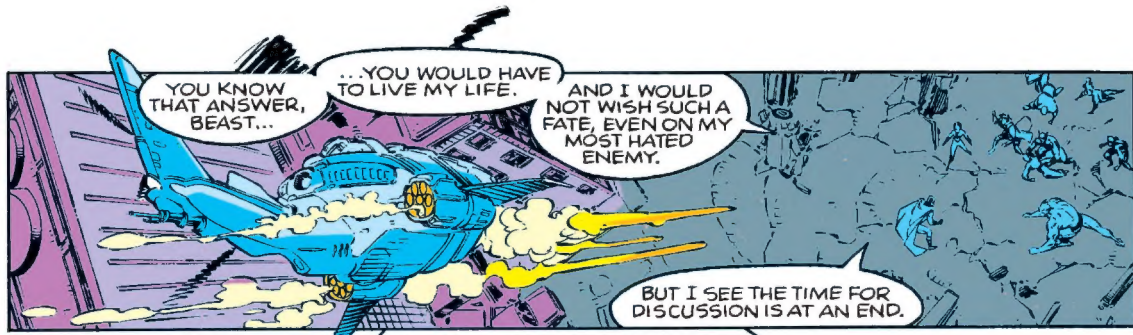
THE GENOSHANS HAVE ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT THEY'VE DONE, MAGNETO. THEY'VE RESOLVED TO MAKE AMENDS.

THEY'VE CHANGED-- FOR THE BETTER!

ABOUT THE DEVASTATION, SOME MIGHT CALL IT FIT PUNISHMENT FOR A STATE WHOSE PROSPERITY WAS BUILT ON THE BACKS OF MUTANT SLAVES!

WHY IS IT YOU'RE GOING THE OTHER DIRECTION?





YOU KNOW THAT ANSWER, BEAST...

...YOU WOULD HAVE TO LIVE MY LIFE.

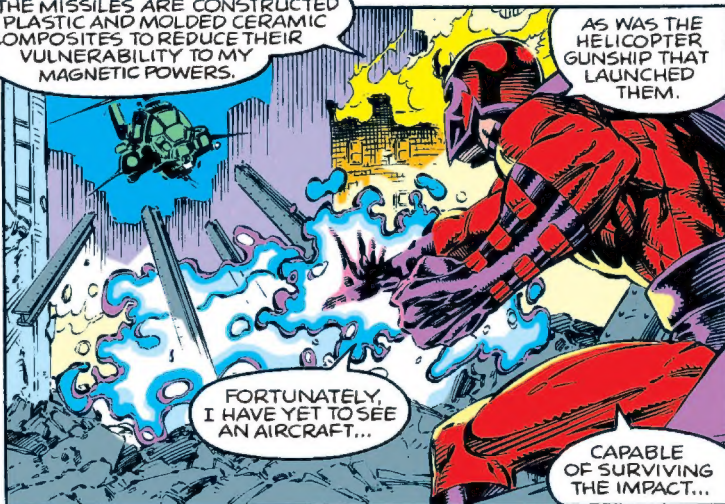
AND I WOULD NOT WISH SUCH A FATE, EVEN ON MY MOST HATED ENEMY.

BUT I SEE THE TIME FOR DISCUSSION IS AT AN END.



MOST IMPRESSIVE.

THE MISSILES ARE CONSTRUCTED OF PLASTIC AND MOLDED CERAMIC COMPOSITES TO REDUCE THEIR VULNERABILITY TO MY MAGNETIC POWERS.



AS WAS THE HELICOPTER GUNSHIP THAT LAUNCHED THEM.

FORTUNATELY, I HAVE YET TO SEE AN AIRCRAFT...

CAPABLE OF SURVIVING THE IMPACT...



...OF MULTIPLE STEEL "I" BEAMS.

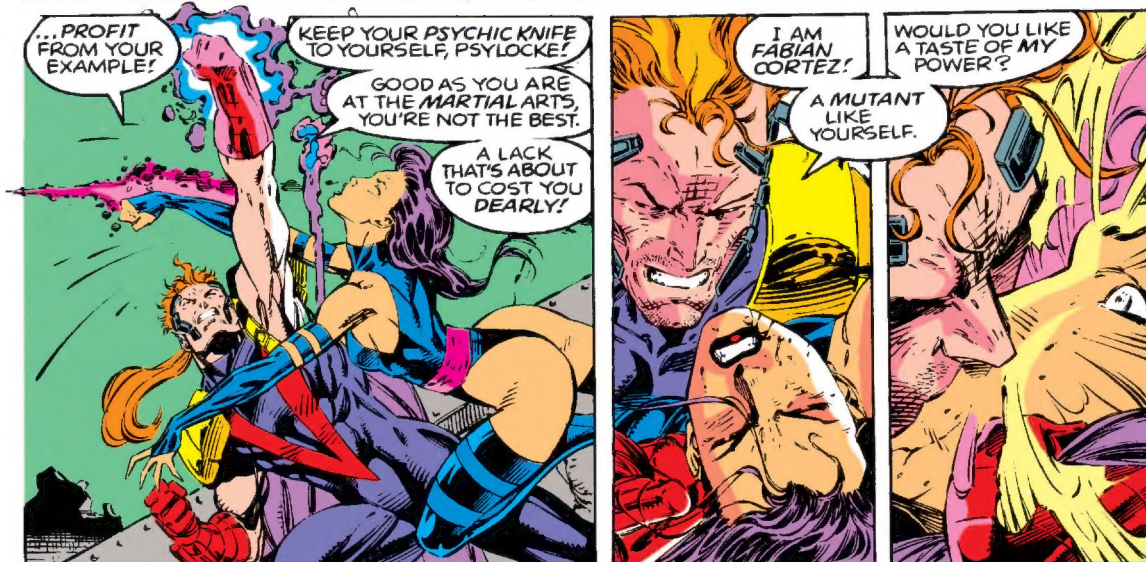
AS I'VE SAID BEFORE, X-MEN, I BEAR YOU NO MALICE, BUT I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO INTERFERE.

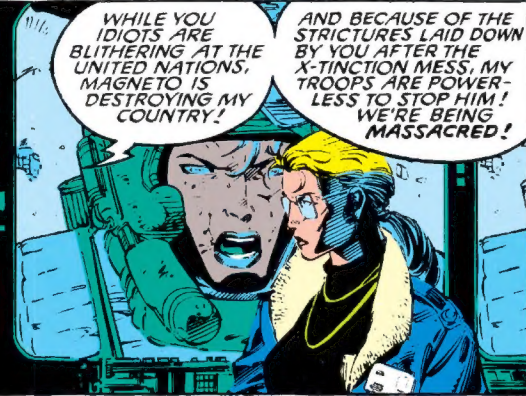
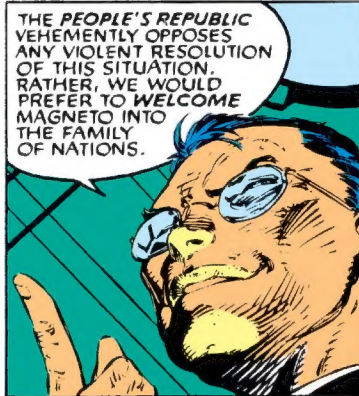
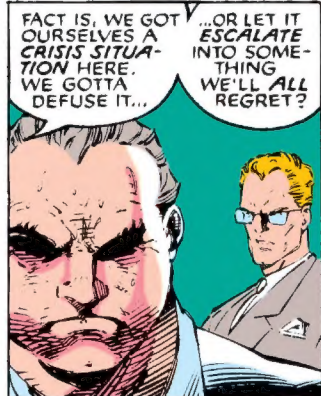
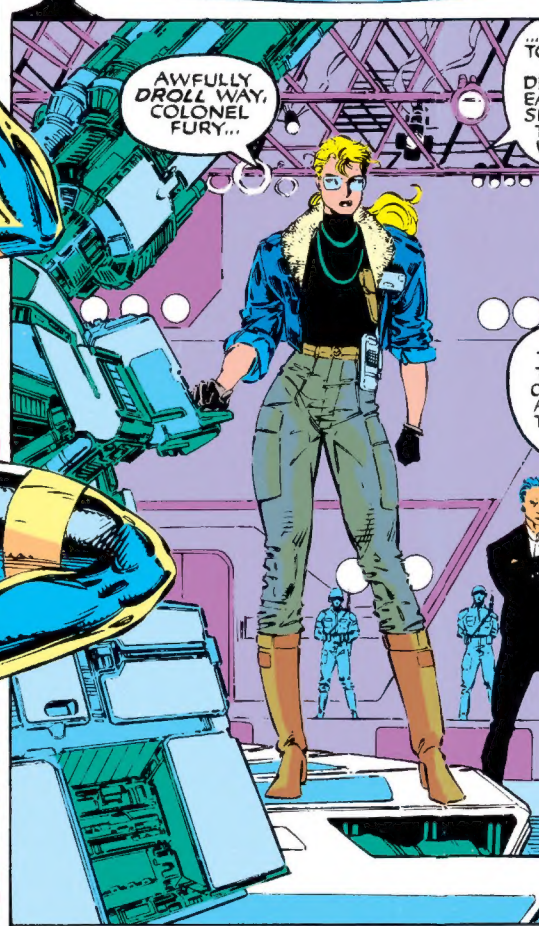
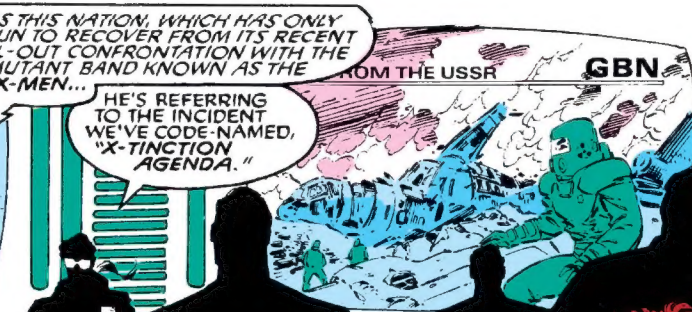
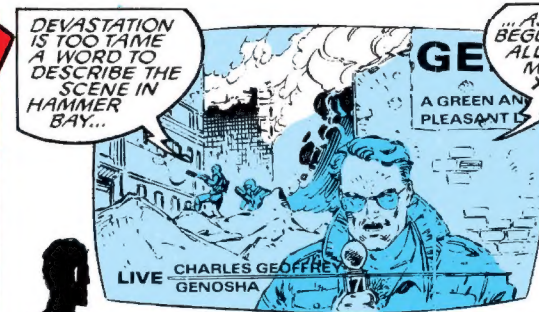
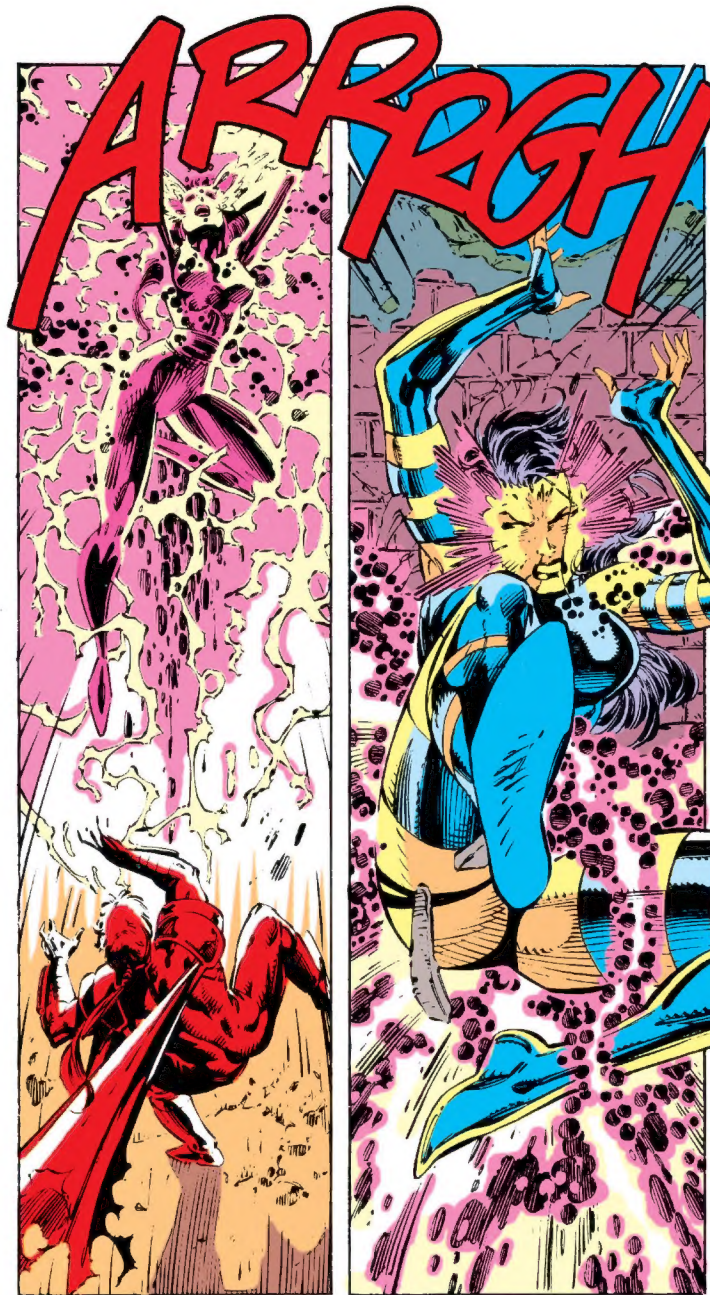


BEST, I THINK, I REMOVE YOU TO THE LOWEST LEVELS OF THIS FACILITY UNTIL MY BUSINESS IS COMPLETE.

WHERE YOUR MYRIAD SKILLS AND TALENTS CAN BE DEVOTED TO THE RESCUE OF THOSE INNOCENTS...

...MY ACTIONS APPEAR TO HAVE PLACED IN DANGER.







WHAT A NASTY LITTLE TEMPER YOU HAVE THERE, FUR-BALL.

YOU MAY WELL HAVE SAVED YOUR FRIEND-- THOUGH I DOUBT IN HER PRESENT STATE, SHE'D CONSIDER THAT A BLESSING--

-- BUT I'LL WAGER AT THE COST OF THE X-MEN'S GOOD AND HEROIC REPUTATION, FAIR TRADE-OFF, D'YOU THINK?

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER, ACOYTE?!

WHY, WHAT COMES NATURALLY, X-MAN!

I ENHANCED PSYLOCKE'S TELEPATHIC POWER TO ITS ULTIMATE EXTENT. SHE'S PROBABLY IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH EVERY SENTIENT MIND ON THE ISLAND.

TENS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE-- D'YOU THINK HER POOR WEE SKULL CAN HANDLE THE LOAD?

PROB'LY A WHOLE LOT BETTER, SLUG...

...THAN YOU CAN, MY QUARTER-STAFF!

STOP!

WITH A WHOLE WORLD SCREAMING FOR MUTANT BLOOD...

...WE CANNOT AFFORD TO WASTE OUR ENERGIES FIGHTING AMONGST OURSELVES.

STRANGE, WE ALWAYS FIGURED WE WERE STANDING AGAINST INJUSTICE.

THEN, BEAST, YOUR PLACE SHOULD BE BY MY SIDE.

FOR WHAT GREATER INJUSTICE CAN THERE BE THAN A PEOPLE WHO WOULD HATE AND EVEN DESTROY THEIR CHILDREN...

...SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY EXIST?

AND YOU'RE ANY DIFFERENT?

YOUR LEADERS ARE BEATEN, YOUR CAUSE LOST. I CALL ON YOU TO YIELD.

HALF-A-WORLD AWAY, IN THE SUBURBAN NEW YORK CITY MANSION THAT HOUSES PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS AND SERVES AS THE X-MEN'S SECRET HEADQUARTERS...

FIRST STRING DEFENSES FULLY ENABLED AND ON-LINE.

ALERT CALL'S OUT TO STORM AND HER TEAM.

D'YE THINK WE'LL BE A TARGET, FORGE?

MAGNETO'S ALL BUT NAILED CYCLOPS'S TEAM, STANDS TO REASON HE'LL COME FOR US NEXT.

FORGE, WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME OF THE MAGNETO PROTOCOLS REFERRED TO IN THE UNITED NATIONS SESSION?

WHAT D'YE THINK THEY'LL DO, CHARLES?

I HAVE NO IDEA, BANSHEE, AND THAT FRIGHTENS ME.

YE'RE TALKIN' LIKE WE'RE IN A WAR.

NO, MY FRIEND. THEY ARE.

BY THE WAY, WHERE IS MOIRA?

RAN OFF, RIGHT WHEN FORGE SOUNDED THE ALARM.

STAY HERE AND ASSIST FORGE. I SHALL FIND HER.

NOT MUCH. THEY'RE PRESIDENTIAL-ACCESS ONLY FILES, ABOUT AS TOP SECRET AS THINGS GET.

I NEED THAT INFORMATION.

PROFESSOR, IT ISN'T WISE TO LEAVE THE SECURE FACILITY.

I'LL COME WITH--!

NO!

I UNDERSTAND THE RISK, FORGE, AND ACCEPT IT.

I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERNS FOR THE WOMAN YOU LOVE, BANSHEE, MINE ARE NO LESS. THAT IS WHY I ASK YOU TO RESPECT MY DECISION.

AND ACCEPT IT.



BULL, MAGNETO. SWEET WORDS MADE LIES BY YOUR OWN ACTIONS.

YOU GOT YOUR HAND AT CYKE'S AND WOLVIE'S THROATS. WHA'CHA GONNA DO IF WE TURN YOU DOWN?

YOU HAVE SEEN ME AT MY BEST, ROGUE. WHY NOW ARE YOU SO EAGER TO BELIEVE THE WORST?

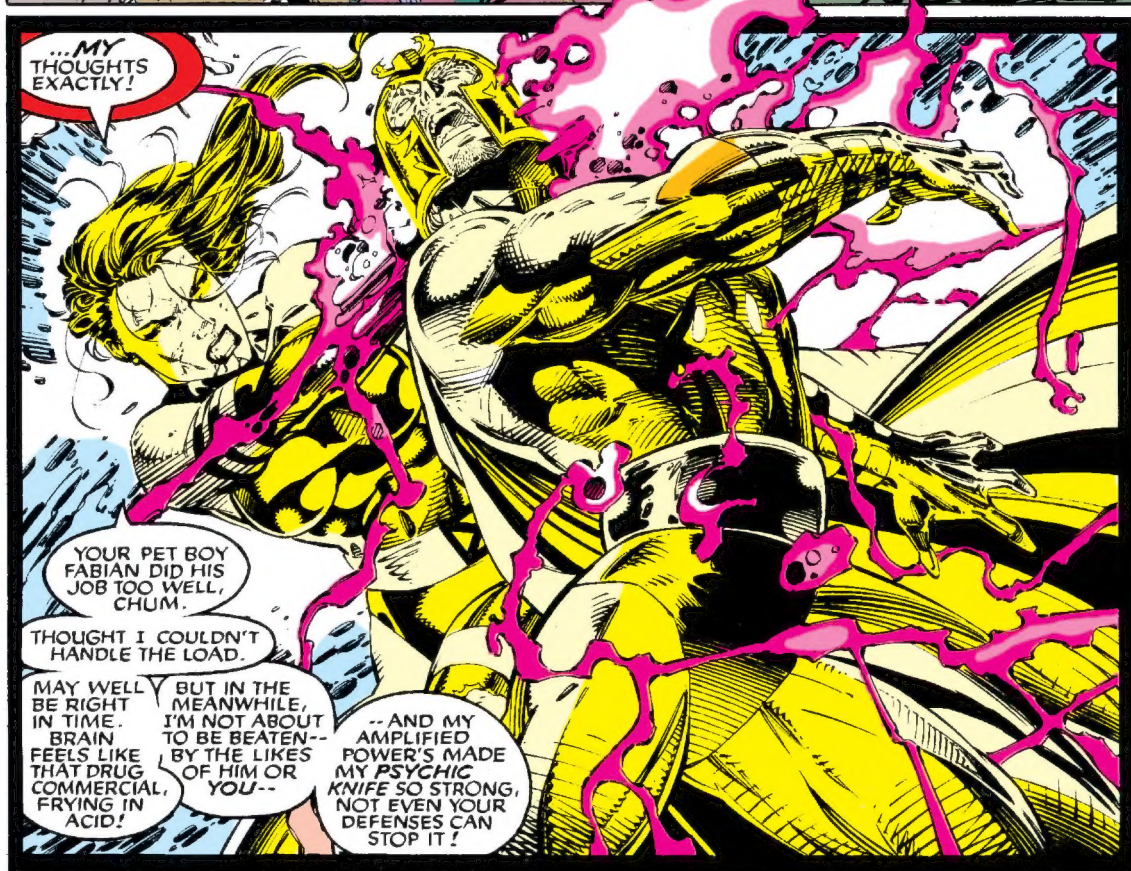
OFFER ME A FRACTION OF THE TRUST YOU GIVE CHARLES XAVIER WITHOUT QUESTION, AND I WILL PROVE TO YOU--



-- BEYOND ALL SHADOW OF A DOUBT-- THAT MINE IS THE TRUE CAUSE.

THE PATH TO SALVATION FOR MUTANTKIND!

FUNNY...



...MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY!

YOUR PET BOY FABIAN DID HIS JOB TOO WELL, CHUM.

THOUGHT I COULDN'T HANDLE THE LOAD.

MAY WELL BE RIGHT IN TIME. BRAIN FEELS LIKE THAT DRUG COMMERCIAL, FRYING IN ACID!

BUT IN THE MEANWHILE, I'M NOT ABOUT TO BE BEATEN-- BY THE LIKES OF HIM OR YOU--

-- AND MY AMPLIFIED POWER'S MADE MY PSYCHIC KNIFE SO STRONG, NOT EVEN YOUR DEFENSES CAN STOP IT!



THE
FORCE
OF THE
MAN--!

ONLY HAVE AN
EDGE BECAUSE I
CAUGHT HIM
OFF-GUARD.

UNDER NORMAL
CIRCUMSTANCES, AT
MY NORMAL LEVELS,
I DOUBT I COULD
COME EVEN CLOSE
TO HURTING HIM.

HOLD
HIM A SEC
LONGER,
BETTS.

YOU BROUGHT
HIM DOWN,
AH'LL TAKE
HIM

OWUHH

!?!



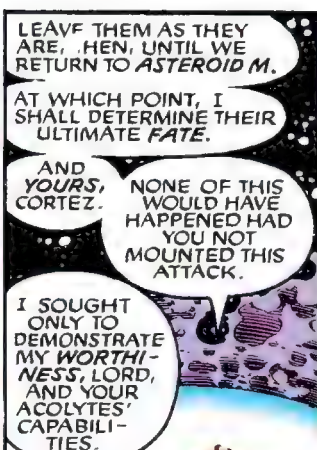
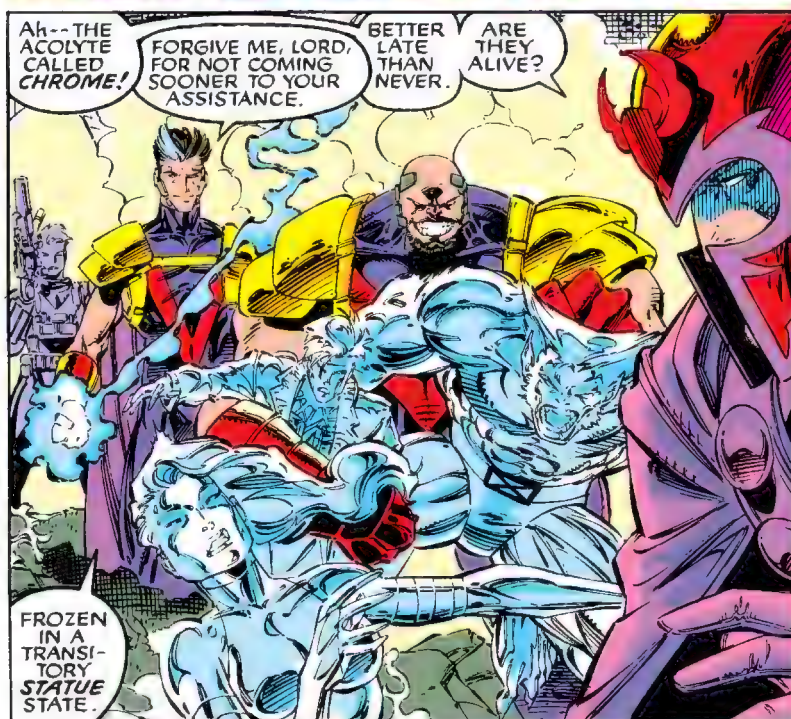
Ah-- THE
ACOLYTE
CALLED
CHROME!

FORGIVE ME, LORD,
FOR NOT COMING
SOONER TO YOUR
ASSISTANCE.

BETTER
LATE
THAN NEVER.

ARE
THEY
ALIVE?

FROZEN
IN A
TRANSI-
TORY
STATUE
STATE.



LEAVE THEM AS THEY
ARE, THEN, UNTIL WE
RETURN TO ASTEROID M.

AT WHICH POINT, I
SHALL DETERMINE THEIR
ULTIMATE FATE.

AND
YOURS,
CORTEZ.

NONE OF THIS
WOULD HAVE
HAPPENED HAD
YOU NOT
MOUNTED THIS
ATTACK.

I SOUGHT
ONLY TO
DEMONSTRATE
MY WORTHI-
NESS, LORD,
AND YOUR
ACOLYTES'
CAPABILI-
TIES.

IN BOTH
THEN, YOU HAVE
FAILED.

DO NOT
DO SO A
SECOND
TIME.

BEFORE
YOU PASS
JUDGMENT,
LORD, I HAVE
UNCOVERED
SOME INFOR-
MATION I
BELIEVE YOU
OUGHT TO
KNOW



AND PRESENTLY, AFTER THEIR UNEVENTFUL RETURN TO ASTEROID M, MAINTAINED BY MAGNETO'S POWER IN LOW EARTH ORBIT 250 KILOMETERS ABOVE THE PLANETARY SURFACE, BEHIND A DEFENSIVE SCREEN OF NUCLEAR MISSILES APPROPRIATED FROM A SUNKEN SOVIET SUBMARINE...

I NOTICED THE ANOMALY WHEN I HEALED YOU OF YOUR WOUNDS, LORD.

A DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE GENETIC CODES IN THE MASTER FILES...

...AND WHAT I SENSED IN YOUR OWN BODY.

AND YOU SAW FIT TO WITHHOLD THIS... REVELATION FROM ME?

NO, LORD, NEVER!

YOU WERE ASLEEP WHEN I LED MY STRIKE GROUP TO GENOSHA. I MEANT TO INFORM YOU UPON OUR RETURN.

IN TRUTH, I WASN'T SURE WHAT TO MAKE OF IT.

IT IS A PIECE OF GENETIC ENGINEERING, AN ARTIFICIAL ALTERATION IN MY DNA CODES.

AND I KNOW OF ONLY ONE WAY IT COULD HAVE OCCURRED.

BAIKONUR COSMODROME, SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA...

...DRI ...SVA ...ODIN--
IGNITION!

< WE HAVE LIFTOFF. VEHICLE CLEARING THE LAUNCH TOWER, ALL SYSTEMS NOMINAL* >

*TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN-- BH.

< A MAGNIFICENT SIGHT, eh, COMRADE DIRECTOR-GENERAL? >

< NOT SO LONG AGO, DMITRI, LAUNCHING THAT PLASMA CANNON WOULD HAVE PROVOKED AN IMMEDIATE THERMONUCLEAR RESPONSE FROM THE AMERICANS. >

< NOW, WASHINGTON CHEERS US ON. IT IS ONLY MAGNETO WE HAVE TO FEAR. >

I WONDER, OLD FRIEND, HAVE OUR ACTIONS SAVED OUR POOR WORLD... >

< ...OR SEALED ITS DOOM. >

THE BOATHOUSE, ON THE SHORE OF
BREAKSTONE LAKE, A BRISK DOWNHILL
WALK FROM XAVIER'S MANSION...

IF IT'S ANSWERS
Y' WANT FROM
ME, CHARLEY...

...ALL Y' NEED DO IS REACH INTO MY
MIND.

IN ALL THE YEARS WE'VE
KNOWN EACH OTHER, MOIRA,
I'VE NEVER DONE THAT.

I GAVE YOU MY
WORD I NEVER
WOULD.

BUT Y'
WANT TO. I
DON'T HAVE
T' BE A
TELEPATH
LIKE YOU T'
KNOW THAT.

ONCE, I HELD BACK
THE TRUTH ABOUT MY
MUTANT SON,
PROTEUS, UNTIL HE
WENT MAD AN' THE
TIME CAME F'R THE
X-MEN T' FIGHT HIM
T' HIS DEATH.

NOW
YE'RE
AFRAID
I'VE
DONE IT
AGAIN.

CHARLES
XAVIER IS
NOT THE ONLY
INTERESTED
PARTY
HERE, DR.
MacTAGGERT.

AND IF YOU ARE
HIDING SOMETHING--
ESPECIALLY SOMETHING
THAT I STRONGLY
SUSPECT PERTAINS
TO ME--

-- I
REALLY
MUST INSIST
YOU REVEAL
WHAT
IT IS.

MAGNETO!?!

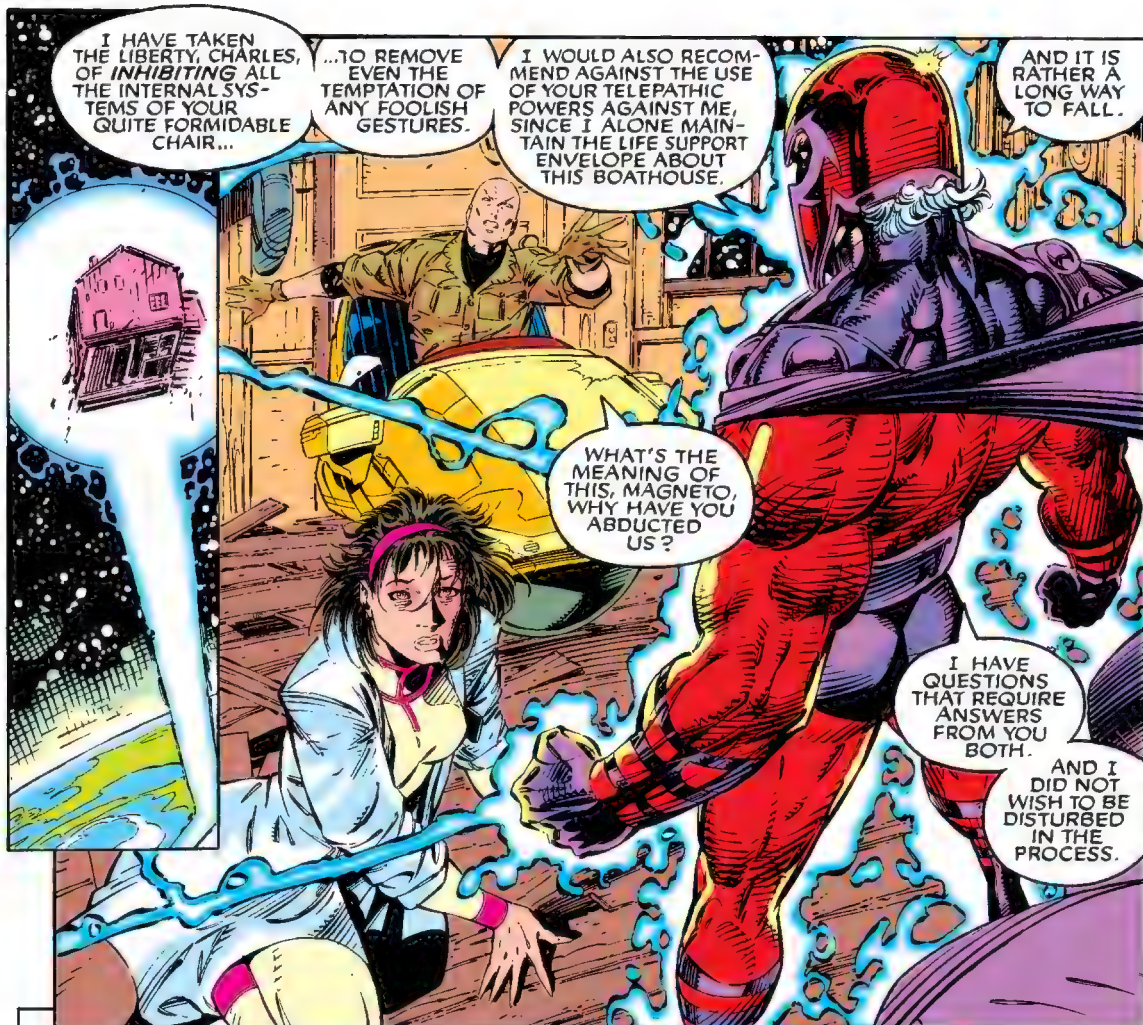
DON'T
BOTHR
ALERTING YOUR
MANSION'S
DEFENDERS,
CHARLES.

WE ARE
QUITE
BEYOND
THEIR
REACH.

I TOLD THE
MAN, I
WARNED
HIM!

NO USE BELLY-
ACHIN'. WE UNDER-
ESTIMATED MAGNETO
AN' HE BURNED
US.

QUESTION
NOW IS,
WHAT DO
WE DO
NEXT?



I HAVE TAKEN THE LIBERTY, CHARLES, OF **INHIBITING** ALL THE INTERNAL SYSTEMS OF YOUR QUITE FORMIDABLE CHAIR...

...TO REMOVE EVEN THE TEMPTATION OF ANY FOOLISH GESTURES.

I WOULD ALSO RECOMMEND AGAINST THE USE OF YOUR TELEPATHIC POWERS AGAINST ME, SINCE I ALONE MAINTAIN THE LIFE SUPPORT ENVELOPE ABOUT THIS BOATHOUSE.

AND IT IS RATHER A LONG WAY TO FALL.

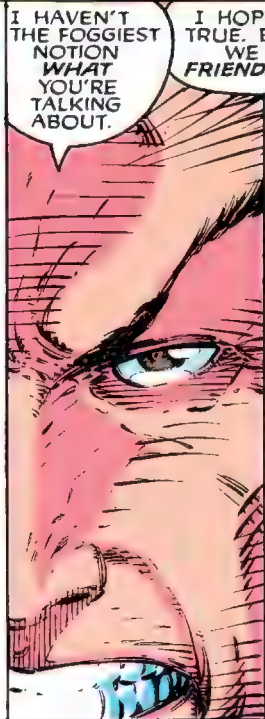
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, MAGNETO, WHY HAVE YOU ABDUCTED US?

I HAVE QUESTIONS THAT REQUIRE ANSWERS FROM YOU BOTH.

AND I DID NOT WISH TO BE DISTURBED IN THE PROCESS.



I HAVE FOUND SOME... INTRIGUING ANOMALIES IN MY DNA MATRIX. I WAS WONDERING WHAT YOU MIGHT TELL ME ABOUT IT.



I HAVEN'T THE FOGGIEST NOTION **WHAT** YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

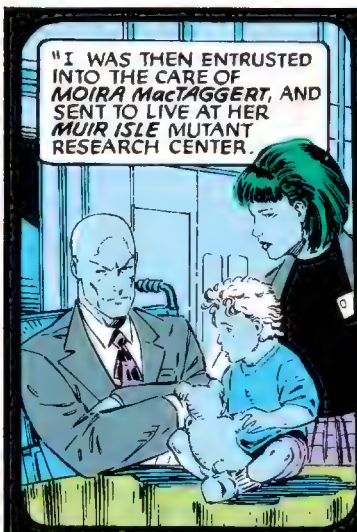


I HOPE THAT'S TRUE, BECAUSE WE WERE **FRIENDS** ONCE.

AND WHEN ONE FRIEND BETRAYS THE OTHER'S **TRUST**, IT LEAVES A WOUND THAT NEVER TRULY HEALS.

CAST YOUR MINDS BACK, BOTH OF YOU, TO MY EARLIEST INCARNATION, AND THAT REGRETTABLE CONFRONTATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS WITH A MUTANT OF MY OWN CREATION...
...WHICH RESULTED IN MY BEING REDUCED TO A STATE OF **INFANCY**. *

*FOR THOSE KEEPING SCORE, IT WAS IN DEFENDERS #16-- Bob.



"I WAS THEN ENTRUSTED INTO THE CARE OF MOIRA MacTAGGERT, AND SENT TO LIVE AT HER MUIR ISLE MUTANT RESEARCH CENTER.



"WHO KNOWS, I MIGHT HAVE LIVED A 'NORMAL' LIFE, HAD NOT AN AGENT OF THE ALIEN SHI'AR...

"...RESTORED ME TO MY PRIME."*

*UNCANNY X-MEN #104-- Bob.



THE QUESTION IS, WHAT OCCURRED DURING THE MONTHS I WAS IN YOUR CARE, MOIRA?

I... I DINNA KEN WHAT Y' MEAN.

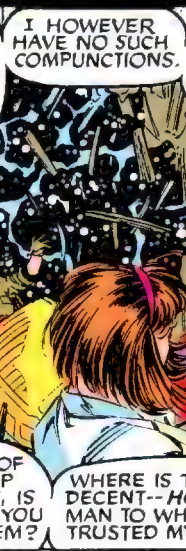
THAT'S A PITY.



REGRETTABLY, I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.



NEITHER, I'LL WAGER, DOES CHARLES, ALTHOUGH HE'S TOO MUCH OF A GENTLEMAN TO PRESS THE POINT.



I HOWEVER HAVE NO SUCH COMPUCTIONS.

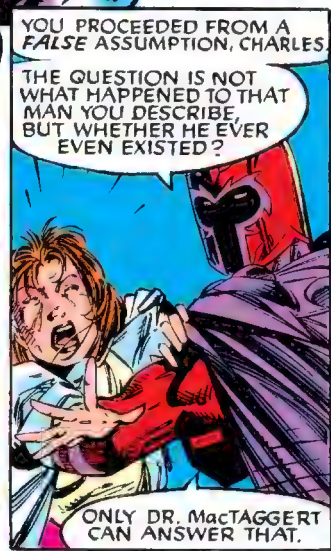


I SUGGEST YOU SEARCH YOUR SOUL-- RATHER QUICKLY-- AND FIND A BETTER, TRUER ANSWER.

CHARLES!

YOU TALK OF FRIENDSHIP AND TRUST, IS THIS HOW YOU RELAY THEM?

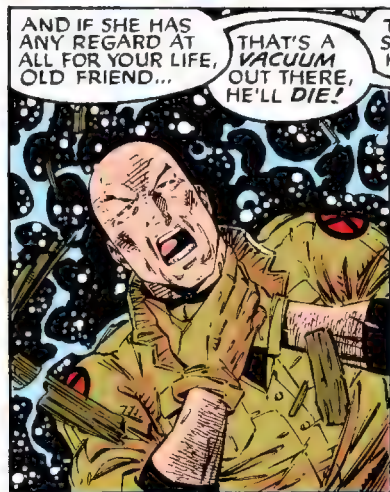
WHERE IS THE GOOD, DECENT--HONORABLE--MAN TO WHOM I ENTRUSTED MY SCHOOL?!



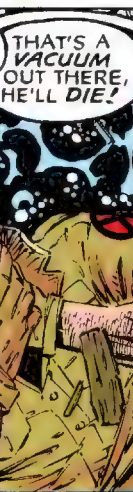
YOU PROCEEDED FROM A FALSE ASSUMPTION, CHARLES.

THE QUESTION IS NOT WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT MAN YOU DESCRIBE, BUT WHETHER HE EVER EVEN EXISTED?

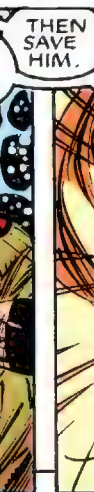
ONLY DR. MacTAGGERT CAN ANSWER THAT.



AND IF SHE HAS ANY REGARD AT ALL FOR YOUR LIFE, OLD FRIEND...



THAT'S A VACUUM OUT THERE, HE'LL DIE!



THEN SAVE HIM.



PLEASE, DON'T HURT HIM!



IT'S ALMOST TOO LATE.

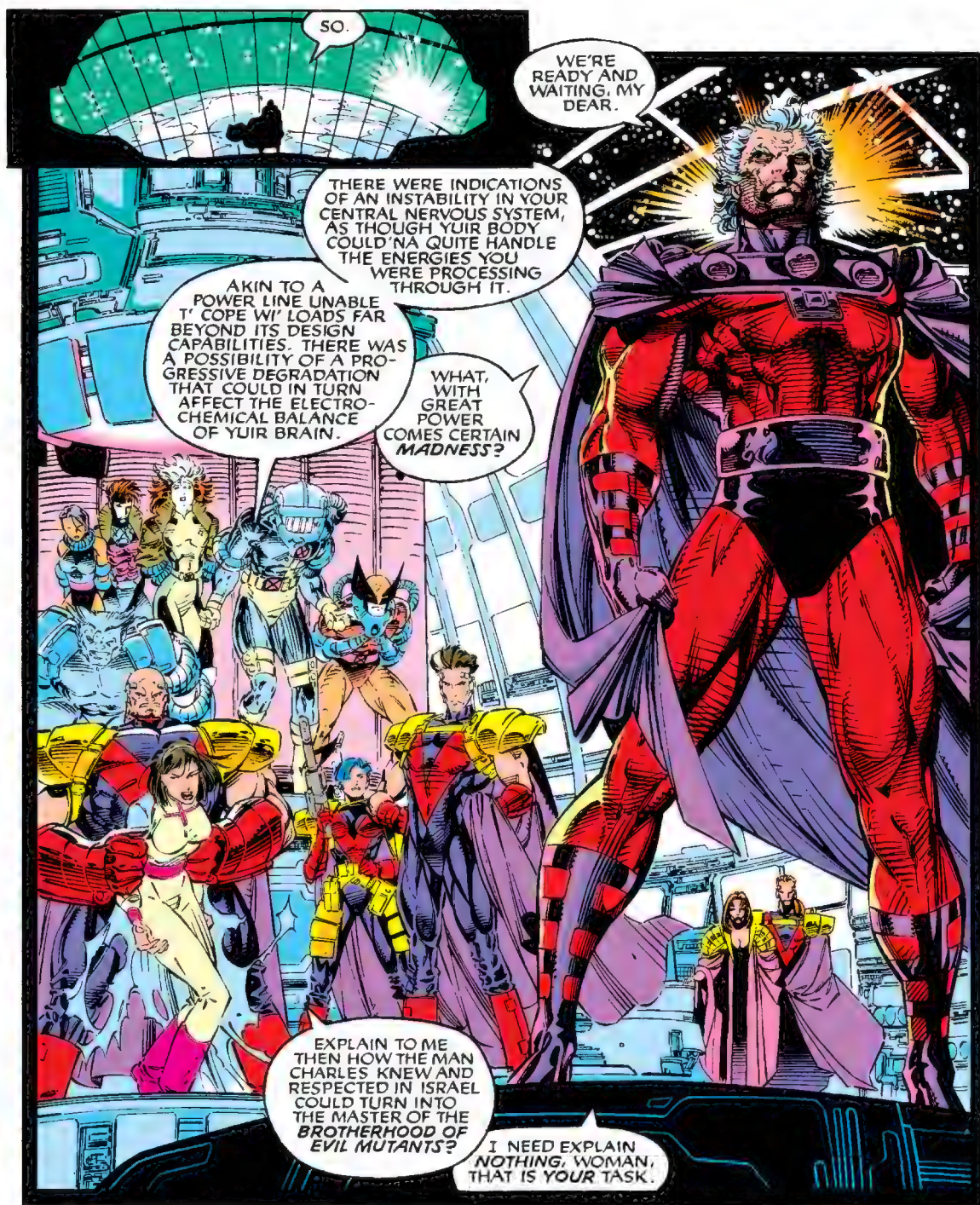
STOP!

I'LL TELL Y' WHAT Y' WANT TO KNOW. JUST BRING HIM BACK INSIDE, PLEASE, I BEG YOU...

...I'LL TELL Y' EVERYTHING!



I NEVER DOUBTED IT FOR AN INSTANT.



SO.

WE'RE
READY AND
WAITING, MY
DEAR.

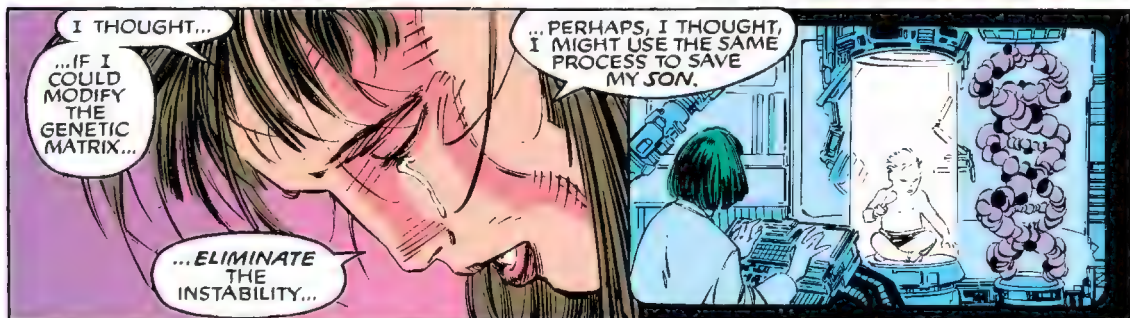
THERE WERE INDICATIONS
OF AN INSTABILITY IN YOUR
CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM,
AS THOUGH YUIR BODY
COULD'NA QUITE HANDLE
THE ENERGIES YOU
WERE PROCESSING
THROUGH IT.

AKIN TO A
POWER LINE UNABLE
T' COPE W/ LOADS FAR
BEYOND ITS DESIGN
CAPABILITIES. THERE WAS
A POSSIBILITY OF A PRO-
GRESSIVE DEGRADATION
THAT COULD IN TURN
AFFECT THE ELECTRO-
CHEMICAL BALANCE
OF YUIR BRAIN.

WHAT,
WITH
GREAT
POWER
COMES CERTAIN
MADNESS?

EXPLAIN TO ME
THEN HOW THE MAN
CHARLES KNEW AND
RESPECTED IN ISRAEL
COULD TURN INTO THE
MASTER OF THE
BROTHERHOOD OF
EVIL MUTANTS?

I NEED EXPLAIN
NOTHING, WOMAN,
THAT IS YOUR TASK.



I THOUGHT...

...IF I
COULD
MODIFY
THE
GENETIC
MATRIX...

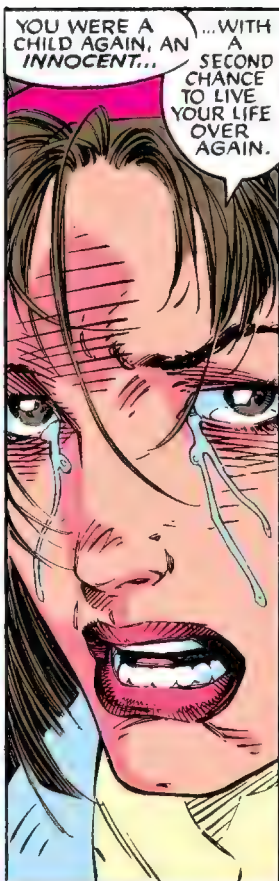
...ELIMINATE
THE
INSTABILITY...

...PERHAPS, I THOUGHT,
I MIGHT USE THE SAME
PROCESS TO SAVE
MY SON.



HOW
SEDUCTIVELY
NOBLE.

AN END THAT
SURELY
JUSTIFIED ANY
MEANS, NO
MATTER HOW
FOUL.



YOU WERE A
CHILD AGAIN, AN
INNOCENT...

...WITH
A
SECOND
CHANCE
TO LIVE
YOUR LIFE
OVER
AGAIN.



AND WHO
GAVE YOU
THE RIGHT
TO PLAY GOD
WITH MY
SOUL?!

BY THE ETERNAL, BY TINKERING
WITH THE FOUNDATION OF MY
BEING, YOU TOOK FROM ME THE
DIMENSIONS OF *MORAL CHOICE!*

EVERY DECISION
I'VE MADE SINCE MY
REBIRTH IS NOW
SUSPECT THANKS
TO YOU--

--EVERY
FIBER OF MY
BEING THROWN
INTO *CHAOS*.



HOW ELSE DID YOU TINKER, DOCTOR,
DID IT *AMUSE* YOU TO SEE HOW EASILY
I MIGHT BE MANIPULATED?

IT WASN'T LIKE THAT!

OF COURSE NOT.
YOU WORKED FOR
THE BETTERMENT OF
THE WORLD AND
THE RACE.

I HEARD
THOSE SAME
RATIONALES AS
A BOY, IN THE
AUSCHWITZ
DEATH CAMP,
FROM DR. JOSEF
MENGELE
HIMSELF!



VERY WELL,
THEN. AS
YOU SOWED,
SO SHALL
YOU REAP.

BY REPLI-
CATING YOUR
PROCESS
WITH THE
X-MEN.

No!



MY DEAR, YOU
SPEAK AS THOUGH
YOU HAVE A *CHOICE*.

CONSIDER THE
ALTERNATIVE--
SHALL I RETURN
YOU HOME ATOP
A CHARIOT MADE
FROM THEIR
BROKEN
BODIES?

TO LIVE
FOREVER
KNOWING THAT
YOU COULD
HAVE SAVED
THEM, BUT
FOR PRIDE?

YOU WILL ENSURE THAT THEY COME TO SEE MINE AS THE ONE, TRUE PATH.

AND THAT THEY FOLLOW ME WILLINGLY.

INDEED, WITH ALL THEIR HEARTS.

YOU CANNOT RESIST ME, MOIRA. OR THE TIDE OF HISTORY I REPRESENT.

FOR YOU ARE ONLY HUMAN.

I GROW IMPATIENT FOR YOUR ANSWER.

AND DO NOT BOTHER LYING. THAT METAL SKINSHEATH NOT ONLY GIVES ME ABSOLUTE CONTROL OVER YOUR BODY, BUT A TOTAL AWARENESS OF IT AS WELL.

I WILL SENSE THE SLIGHTEST ATTEMPT AT DECEPTION. AND RESPOND ACCORDINGLY.

DO WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, MOIRA? WILL YOU BEHAVE YOURSELF, AND DO AS I COMMAND?

YES.

PROLOGUE:

THE SAKHALIN ISLANDS, BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND JAPAN...

YOUR MISSION WAS SUCCESSFUL, GENERAL AKHRONAYEV?

AS THE AMERIKANSKI SAY, COMRADE, "PIECE OF CAKE."

THAT ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE MAGNETO IGNITED HAS CRASHED EVERY MAIN COMPUTER NETWORK IN THE RODINA. EVEN THE SHIELDED MILITARY NODES HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY DEGRADED.

THEY'LL NEVER KNOW OMEGA'S MISSING.

ASSUMING ANYONE EVEN REMEMBERS IT EVEN EXISTS.

YOU REMEMBERED, COMRADE GENERAL.

HOW FORTUITOUSLY PROFITABLE FOR BOTH OF US THAT I DID.

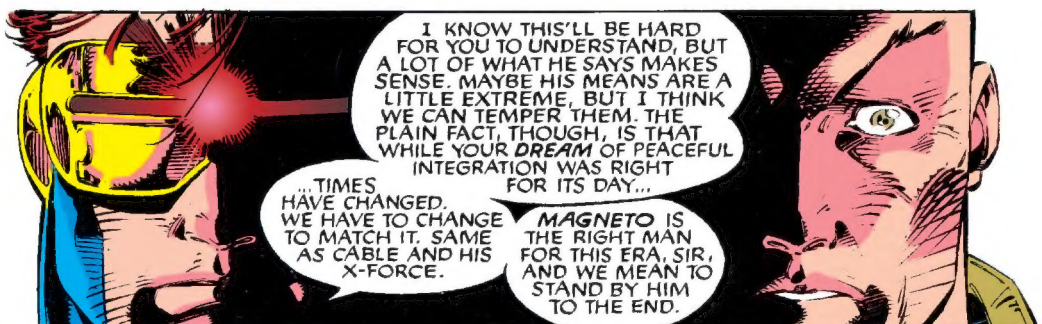
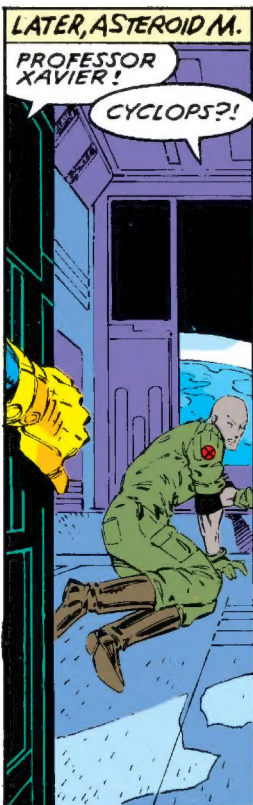
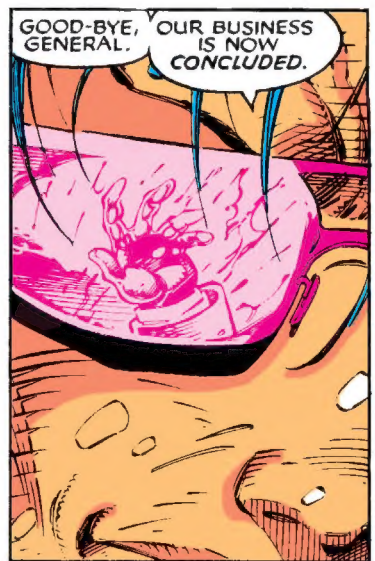
IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU, SELLING OUT YOUR RODINA, YOUR SACRED MOTHERLAND, FOR PERSONAL GAIN?

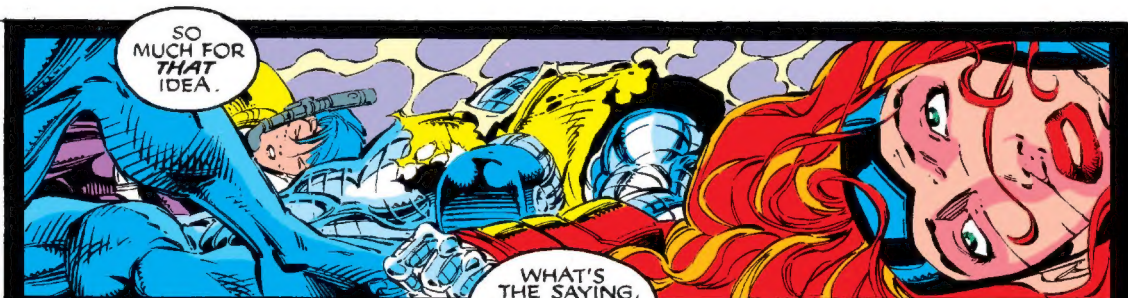
NOT AT ALL THE ACT OF A GOOD COMMUNIST. OR A PATRIOT.

A FOOL'S SENTIMENTS, THESE DAYS. AND A FOOL'S BELIEFS.

PITY. WHEN A MAN HAS TO DIE...

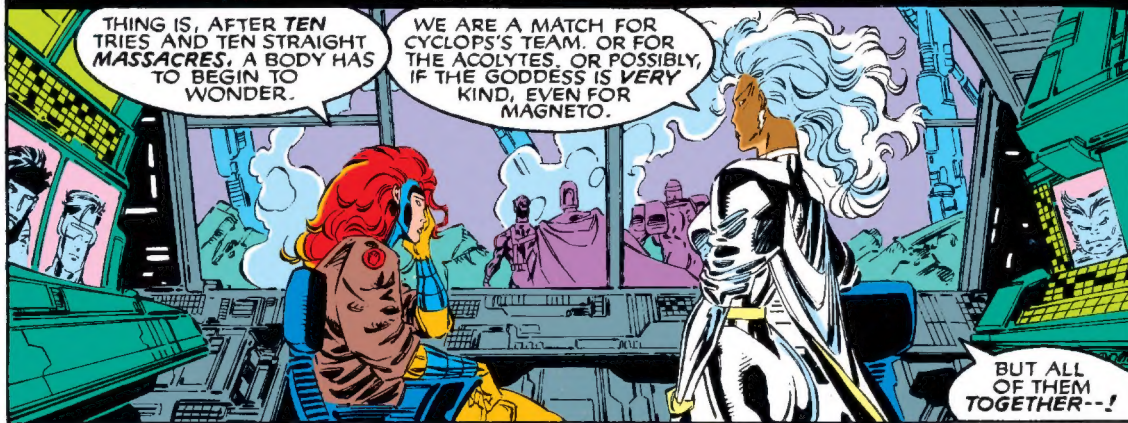
... IT SHOULD BE FOR SOMETHING MORE THAN THE PROMISE OF MERE WEALTH.





SO MUCH FOR THAT IDEA.

WHAT'S THE SAYING, 'IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...'



THING IS, AFTER TEN TRIES AND TEN STRAIGHT MASSACRES, A BODY HAS TO BEGIN TO WONDER.

WE ARE A MATCH FOR CYCLOPS'S TEAM. OR FOR THE ACOLYTES. OR POSSIBLY, IF THE GODDESS IS VERY KIND, EVEN FOR MAGNETO.

BUT ALL OF THEM TOGETHER--!



WELL, THAT IS WHY WE HAVE THE DANGER ROOM.

TO EXAMINE HOW OUR FOES THINK AND ACT, THAT WE MAY BETTER UNCOVER A WEAKNESS WE CAN USE TO DEFEAT THEM.

ALWAYS ASSUMING THEY HAVE ONE.



SCOTT AND HIS TEAM ARE THE KEY. YOU ARE CERTAIN THEY HAVE BEEN TURNED?

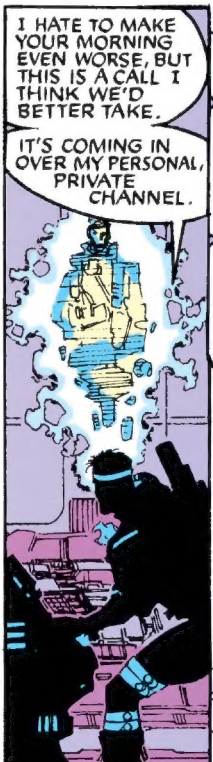
I'M AFRAID SO.

BUT HOW IS IT YOU KNOW? THROUGH THE PSYCHIC RAP-PORT YOU ONCE SHARED WITH SCOTT?



SORRY TO INTERRUPT, LADIES-- ANOTHER LOSS?

GEEZ--LOUISE, ORORO, WHAT ARE WE TODAY, THE METS?



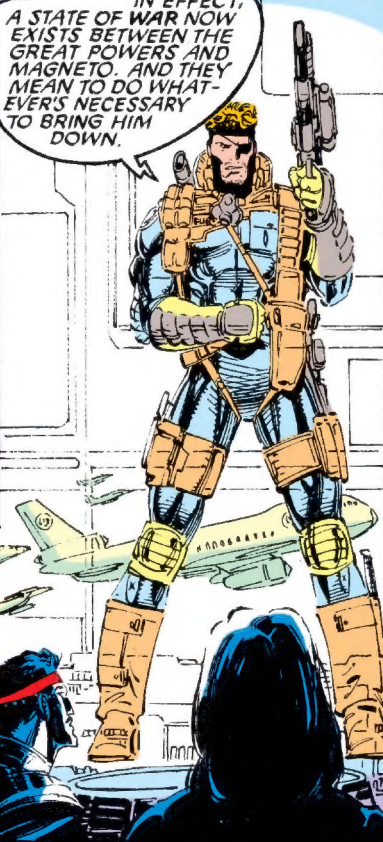
I HATE TO MAKE YOUR MORNING EVEN WORSE, BUT THIS IS A CALL I THINK WE'D BETTER TAKE.

IT'S COMING IN OVER MY PERSONAL, PRIVATE CHANNEL.

I'M BREAKIN' A WHOLE HOST O' RULES BY MAKIN' THIS CALL, FORGE, BUT I DON'T MUCH CARE.

THE DECISION'S BEEN MADE AND RATIFIED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO EXECUTE STAGE 3 OF THE MAGNETO PROTOCOLS. IN COMPLIANCE, AMERICAN STRATEGIC FORCES HAVE GONE TO DEFCON 1. SO'VE THE RUSSIANS.

IN EFFECT, A STATE OF WAR NOW EXISTS BETWEEN THE GREAT POWERS AND MAGNETO. AND THEY MEAN TO DO WHATEVER'S NECESSARY TO BRING HIM DOWN.



THE RUSSIANS HAVE LAUNCHED AN ASSAULT VEHICLE, REPRESENTING THE PINNACLE OF THEIR MILITARY TECHNOLOGY.

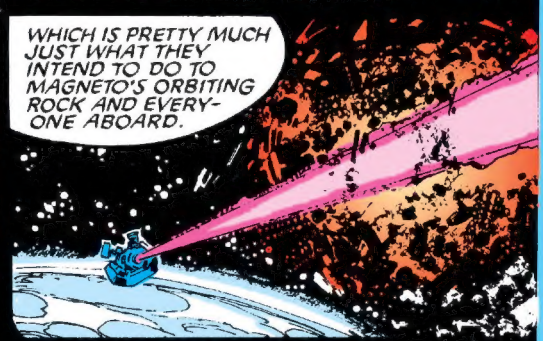


IT'S AN ENERGY CANNON, FIRING BEAMS OF ULTRA-INTENSITY NUCLEAR PLASMA. IT'S NEVER BEEN FIELD TESTED. IT'S SO POWERFUL THEY DIDN'T DARE INSIDE THE ATMOSPHERE.

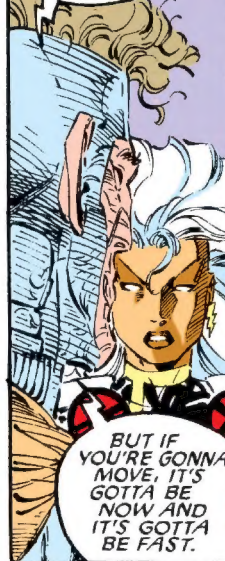
IT'S THE KIND OF WEAPON A BODY'D USE TO PUNCH THROUGH PLANETS.



WHICH IS PRETTY MUCH JUST WHAT THEY INTEND TO DO TO MAGNETO'S ORBITING ROCK AND EVERYONE ABOARD.



UNLESS, MAYBE, YOU WERE TO GET THERE FIRST AN' TAKE 'EM OFF.



YOU GUYS SAW THE SIMULATIONS. WE GOT CREAMED.

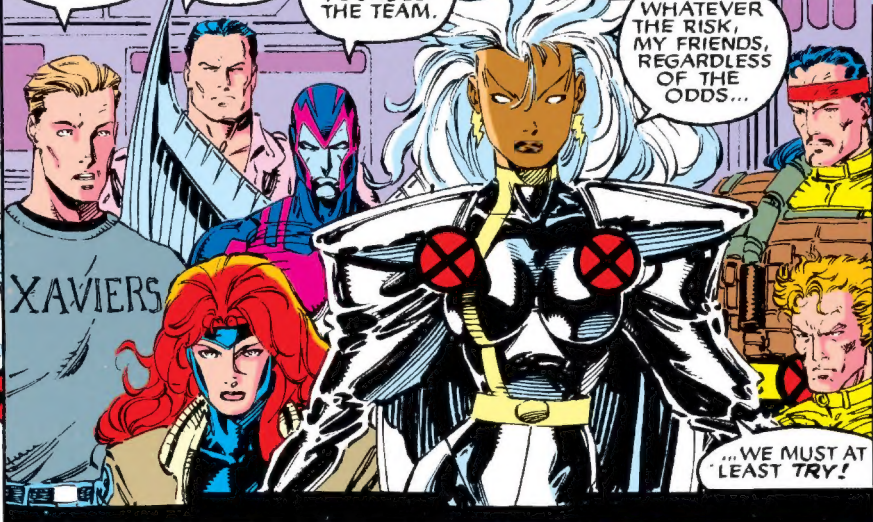
WE ARE OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS, ICEMAN.

IT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR, KIDDO, WHY PROFESSOR X FOUNDED THE TEAM.

YOU KNOW, MAGNETO'S SURE TO BE WAITING FOR US.

THEN, FORGE, LET US NOT DISAPPOINT HIM.

WHATEVER THE RISK, MY FRIENDS, REGARDLESS OF THE ODDS...



BUT IF YOU'RE GONNA MOVE, IT'S GOTTA BE NOW AND IT'S GOTTA BE FAST.

...WE MUST AT LEAST TRY!

TO BE CONCLUDED!



MINUTEMEN

Bluntman